

Title: The Danger of Idolatry
Scripture: 2 Samuel 19:1-8A
Series: The Promise of the Messianic Kingdom

1. Introduction:

- a. In our recent sermon, we explored the compelling narrative of Absalom's dramatic downfall—a rebellious son seeking to overthrow his father, David, forcibly. Absalom's ungodly ambitions to seize the throne cast a shadow of despair, creating the illusion that David's death and Absalom's ascent were inevitable. From the human perspective, it appeared that all was lost, and the very foundation of God's kingdom was on the brink of destruction.
- b. Nevertheless, the unfolding historical events align with God's grand design when seen through divine providence. The seemingly unstoppable force represented by Absalom met a gruesome end, precisely as foretold in Scripture, where God had decreed calamity upon him. We revisited the divine perspective, which teaches us that God's overarching plan always advances steadfastly despite human perceptions of failure.
- c. The conclusion of our previous chapter took an unexpected turn. Rather than rejoicing in God's deliverance, David was enveloped in sorrow, shedding tears for his son. This poignant moment unveiled a truth: David's love for his unrepentant son had eclipsed his commitment to God's kingdom and people. This emotional imbalance amounted to

idolatry, a grave transgression carrying significant consequences.

d. As we resume the narrative today, David remains in the grip of mourning instead of celebrating God's deliverance, and the consequences of this grave sin begin echoing through the story.

2. Verse 1-8A: Idolatry in God's camp: It was told Joab, "Behold, the king is weeping and mourning for Absalom." (2) So the victory that day was turned into mourning for all the people, for the people heard that day, "The king is grieving for his son." (3) And the people stole into the city that day as people steal in who are ashamed when they flee in battle. (4) The king covered his face, and the king cried with a loud voice, "O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son!" (5) Then Joab came into the house to the king and said, "You have today covered with shame the faces of all your servants, who have this day saved your life and the lives of your sons and your daughters and the lives of your wives and your concubines, (6) because you love those who hate you and hate those who love you. For you have made it clear today that commanders and servants are nothing to you, for today I know that if Absalom were alive and all of us were dead today, then you would be pleased. (7) Now therefore arise, go out and speak kindly to your servants, for I swear by the LORD, if you do not go, not a man will stay with you this night, and this will be worse for you than all the evil that has come upon you from your youth until now." (8) Then the king arose and took his seat in the gate. And the people were all told, "Behold, the king

is sitting in the gate.” And all the people came before the king.

a. The passage begins not with the expected shouts of victory but with the lamentations of **mourning for all the people**. David had turned a joyous occasion into a funeral wake.

b. As parents, our immediate inclination is to empathize with David. After all, who among us wouldn't shed tears upon hearing news of the passing of one of our children? However, David's tears take on a different significance, as they not only express grief but also symbolize a rejection of God's deliverance, kingdom, and people in favor of a son who is not only unrepentant but also guilty of murder and blasphemy. Despite the clear divine intervention against Absalom, evident to both David and all observers, David's **mourning** seems to hate the very work of God.

i. As we explored in our earlier sermon, idolatry, particularly the worship of children, stands as a dangerous sin. It is an all-too-common pitfall that we can easily fall into. The desire to prioritize our children and families above our love for God and His people is a strong temptation—one that we must steadfastly avoid. Such a sin should never find a place in our hearts and lives.

1. **1 Corinthians 10:14** Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.

ii. Before assuming the role of a father, David needed to acknowledge that his primary identity was that of a servant of God. We must also grasp this principle—our allegiance should be directed

foremost to God, His family, and His cause, over our individual interests.

1. And because we belong to Him who saved us, our Lord holds the rightful authority to remove from our lives that which would lead His people astray.
2. The removal of evil from our lives should be a cause for worship, not tears, as God acts out of love for His people.
3. Beloved, God will eliminate anything that would stumble His people, regardless of how cherished it may be to us individually. Examples of this truth can be found in the Scriptures:

- a. From David, our Lord took the usurping Absalom, who would have destroyed the promised messianic kingdom.
- b. From Eli, God took his two blasphemous sons, who were corrupting worship and causing the people of God to loathe the sacrifice.
- c. And from Aaron, God took his two pretentious sons who would have taught the people that worship could be defined by man and not by God.
 - i. **Leviticus 10:1-3** Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it and laid incense on it and offered unauthorized fire before the

LORD, which he had not commanded them. (2) And fire came out from before the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD. (3) Then Moses said to Aaron, “This is what the LORD has said: ‘Among those who are near me I will be sanctified, and before all the people I will be glorified.’” And Aaron held his peace.

1. Aaron's response to the death of his sons demonstrates honoring God's judgment and accepting what is done in His name. Aaron held his peace. He knew that what God had done was holy and perfect. He could not impune, by his tears, the character of God. He could not mourn his sons because his sons would have destroyed God's people. What God had done was good and needful! As a follower of God, Aaron's allegiance must be first to God and God's people.

c. David made a shameful occasion of God's deliverance. David's mourning not only questioned God's actions but also shamed and mistreated the

people of God. The soldiers **stole into the city as people steal in who are ashamed when they flee in battle.**

- i. David's grief, evident in the **covering of his face**, went beyond himself to cast a shadow of shame upon his loyal servants. His sorrow became their sorrow, and in mourning over their actions, David unwittingly rejected his own people. Instead of returning to the camp as victors, the people came back as if they had **acted cowardly** in the battle, marked by a sense of defeat rather than victory.

1. The people of God had steadfastly stood by their king, but, unfortunately, the king did not stand firmly with them.

- d. Upon learning of David's mourning, Joab reacts angrily and steps in. Joab's words are accusatory, suggesting that David is breaking the covenant between God, the king, and the people. This covenant demanded David's commitment to prioritize Israel's welfare over his personal emotions—a duty that David was failing to fulfill.

- i. **2 Samuel 5:3** So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD, and they anointed David king over Israel.
- ii. David had neglected his duty to love both God and His people. This also serves as a warning for us; without careful attention, we may fall short in keeping God's two great commands.

1. **Matthew 22:37-40** And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all

your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. (38) This is the great and first commandment. (39) And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. (40) On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

- e. Listen to Joab’s words. **“You have today covered with shame the faces of all your servants, who have this day saved your life and the lives of your sons and your daughters and the lives of your wives and your concubines,**
- i. Had Israel not acted valiantly? They were willing to substitute their lives for David and his family. They had courageously bled and died so that David would live.
 1. **They had saved David’s life** - Absalom’s whole plan was centered around David’s death.
 2. **They had saved David’s sons and daughters** - Absalom would have killed the royal family to prevent anyone from replacing him.
 3. **They had saved David’s wives and concubines** - Absalom would have taken royal possession of them and made them his.
 - ii. In everything, this faithful family of God had loved David above loving themselves. This is what Christianity calls us to.

1. **1 John 3:16** By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.
 - a. Beloved, this is the duty that each of us owes to the family of God. We are called to prioritize the congregation's needs above our own, to embrace the brethren with a truly self-sacrificial love.
2. Genuine love is a sign of our conversion and our faith's genuineness. We read in **John 13:34-35** A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. (35) By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”
 - f. Joab accused David...**because you love those who hate you and hate those who love you.**
 - i. When our love for unbelievers, even our closest blood relatives, surpasses our love for our brothers in Christ—those redeemed by the most precious blood of Christ—we dishonor God.
 1. Christ taught us the importance of the spiritual over the earthly family. We read in **Matthew 12:46-50** While he was still speaking to the people, behold, his mother and his brothers stood outside, asking to speak to him. (48) But he replied to the man who told him, “Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?” (49) And stretching

out his hand toward his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! (50) For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.”

a. Brothers and sisters, let us carefully learn the lesson this portion of Scripture conveys.

i. First and foremost, Christ deliberately redefines the concept of family. He teaches that genuine familial bonds are rooted in the spiritual realm rather than the earthly.

1. In other words, the brother or sister in Christ sitting beside me in the pew should hold a more cherished place in my heart than any unsaved family member who blasphemes His name through their persistent rejection of Christ.

ii. Secondly, Christ purposefully prioritizes the spiritual family over the earthly. As His disciples, we are called to emulate His example and choose the spiritual bonds that unite us in Christ above the earthly ties.

1. Beloved, our hope and the effort of our evangelism is to

see Christ be birthed in our children and earthly families so that they may be the spiritual family of God, but until that happens, we owe a greater duty to the family of God than to any other individual or group.

g. For you have made it clear today that commanders and servants are nothing to you, for today I know that if Absalom were alive and all of us were dead today, then you would be pleased.

i. Beloved, Joab is right, and may we never be guilty of the same trespass as David.

1. By his actions, David had shown that the family of God **meant nothing to him**. In choosing a natural born son who was an unrepentant sinner over the welfare of the family of God, David demonstrated the absence of divine love for the people of God.

2. Joab's accusation is serious. Because **today, I know that if Absalom were alive and all of us were dead today, you would be pleased.**

a. Beloved, do not miss Joab's point. David would have been pleased to sacrifice the kingdom and people of God for his blasphemous son.

i. We are not speaking hypothetically when we say that

we must love the family of God above all earthly relationships. Joab genuinely rebukes David for choosing a wayward son over the people of God. And Beloved, God will, too.

- ii. God will hold each of us accountable if, by our actions, we demonstrate that we sacrifice the holy (His people) for the profane (sinners close to us).
 1. **1 Juan 4:7-8** Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. (8) Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.
 2. **1 Juan 4:20-21** If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. (21) And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.
- b. David’s failure to love God’s people is no small matter. Joab understood this.

If the king does not truly love the people, what hope does the kingdom have? Beloved, we praise God that that King of kings has always and will always love the elect of God. He will never fail in the area of love. But we, as the church, must keep in step with Christ's love for us by loving each other as deeply as Scripture commands.

- i. This type of love bears witness to our salvation because it speaks to our understanding of the value of Christ's shed blood. We cannot discard someone for whom Christ has died. We cannot belittle or ignore a soul for which Christ became incarnate, substituted, and resurrected. We cannot treat the blood of Christ as if it was common.

h. Thus, Joab warns David, emphasizing that the kingdom's stability is in jeopardy and that his actions could have severe consequences. The men who had recently fought for David might abandon the cause.

- i. **“Speak kindly.”** Lit., Speak to the heart. **“For I swear by the LORD, if you do not go, not a man will stay with you this night, and this will be worse for you than all the evil that has come upon you from your youth until now.”**
“This threat was grounded on Joab’s popularity

with the army. David was about to be abandoned. This would be disastrous.

- i. Joab's warning prompts David to regain control of his emotions and seek reconciliation with his men.

Despite the challenges ahead, David visibly repents, acknowledging his error and changing course.

- i. So, in this last verse, we find the only cure for idolatry, and it is two-fold.

1. We must keep the love of God always before us. We cannot drift from this position like the Ephesian church did:

- a. **Revelation 2:2-5** “I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. (3) I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary. (4) But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. (5) Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.

2. We must prioritize our hearts in order to love the people of God biblically. This means that we must be serious in our efforts to love

God's elect, not with lip service, but with Holy Spirit induced affection.

- a. **John 13:34** A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.
- b. **Ephesians 4:31-32** Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. (32) Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

3. Benediction:

- a. **Psalms 145:17-18** The LORD is righteous in all his ways and kind in all his works. (18) The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

Public Reading of Scripture Matthew 12:46-50